SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

Vol. III, No. 1 | P.O. Box 21123, Washington, D.C. 20009 | Jan. 1, 1973

Academy Study Terms Agricultural Research "Appalling"

Agricultural research is hailed as one of America's greatest achievements. It is given major credit for producing whopping food surpluses, improving health, freeing man from backbreaking toil, and otherwise contributing to what is routinely described as "the miracle of American agriculture."

But now there is evidence that the so-called "miracle" rests on shaky underpinnings. A committee of experts assembled by the National Academy of Sciences has reviewed the research programs of the Department of Agriculture and the land-grant schools and has found "a shocking amount of low-quality research in agriculture." The thrust of the committee's report which has not been widely circulated, is that, while agricultural researchers have undoubtedly made many important contributions toward increasing productivity and advancing scientific knowledge, much of their current work is mediocre and compares poorly with the work being supported by such agencies as NSF and NIH. The Academy's indictment is sweeping in nature and savage in tone. It constitutes one of the most blistering assessments of a government research program made in recent memory. Not surprisingly, it has sparked an angry retort from the agricultural community (see "Response," p. 4).

The Academy review was originally requested by the Agriculture Department in February 1969; it was later co-sponsored by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. The principal charge to the Academy was to evaluate the quality of science being used in agricultural research, ascertain the extent to which agricultural research draws strength from and contributes to the basic scientific disciplines, and make recommendations for improvements. The project was carried out by a 19-man committee, chaired by Glenn S. Pound, dean of the College of Agricul-

(Continued on page 2)

NIH Staff Protests Marston Ouster

The Inter-Assembly Council, a loose confederation of working scientists at NIH's Bethesda campus, has written to President Nixon to protest the firing of NIH Director Robert Q. Marston, whose forced resignation the President accepted December 12.

The letter, drafted at a meeting of some 30 representatives of various Institutes on December 15, expressed "deep regret" at the "unprecedented forced resignation" of Marston and noted that the NIH firing was unprecedented.

Praising Marston for what was described as leadership that had helped bring distinction to NIH in both basic and clinical research, the letter urged the President to select a successor not only on the basis of administrative ability but also with "stature" in both fields of research.

The move is a relatively daring one for federal employees to take these days; it is likely to have as much effect as picketing the White House in protest against bombing North Vietnam.

In Brief

With the Nixon administration yet to act on hundreds of resignations that it exacted from senior government officials, utter caution has descended on the federal bureaucracy. One top appointee from whom SGR sought some routine but officially unannounced information, replied, "I'd normally tell you, but they haven't told me whether I'm staying so I'd better be careful."... Release date for the FY '74 budget has not been set, but agencies have been advised to aim for holding press briefings on Jan. 29... Meanwhile, Washington resounds with reports that OMB is wielding the axe mercilessly, with the Office of Education budget widely reported to be in for a 10-percent cut... NSF Director Stever tells SGR that "we're arguing with OMB" about the release of some $60 million of past appropriations, but he describes the situation as "normal"... Stever also reports that NSF's education programs will be sharply pointed toward "socially relevant" programs, and that basic research in education will receive "a smaller fraction." "We're cooking up a new look," he says... The tobacco industry long ago concluded that it can live and thrive with the government's feeble anti-smoking efforts. Figures confirm that: while annual per capita cigarette consumption is down to 4050 this year as compared with 4354 in 1963, total sales set a record, 566 billion, up four per cent in one year.

GAO Finds Little Fault in Ocean Study

The 10-year, $68-million Ocean Sediment Coring Program and its principal contractor, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, have emerged relatively unscathed from a routine examination by the General Accounting Office.

The GAO recommended to NSF, which provides the funds, that Scripps speed up the distribution of cores, seek means to circulate research reports contained in unpublished papers, and keep a closer watch on costs. None of the comments was harsh and it is unlikely that any significant changes will result from the inquiry. (*Achievements, Cost, and Administration of the Ocean Sediment Coring Program*," 54 pages, available free to academic libraries, faculty members and students; others, $1; General Accounting Office, Room 6417, 441 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20548.)

NAS STUDY *(Continued from page 1)*

tural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin.

The committee included a number of basic researchers, such as Nobel Laureate Robert W. Holley, of the Salk Institute, and a number of scientists from traditional agricultural institutions as well, such as Nyle C. Brady, a former top Agriculture Department official who is now director of the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station. The committee visited agricultural installations, sought opinions from a large number of research scientists and administrators, appointed ad hoc panels to review specific areas of agricultural research, and, in 1972, after three years of labor, produced a 464-page volume of findings and recommendations. The volume includes a 79-page report representing the consensus of the main committee, plus companion papers that were developed by the ad hoc panels but not necessarily endorsed by the full committee.

Here, in capsule form, are the committee's major findings about the research programs conducted by the USDA and the State Agricultural Experiment Stations:

Quality of Research. Although the committee found "many programs of excellence," it concluded that "much of agricultural research is outmoded, pedestrian, and inefficient." The committee found "an unwarranted duplication of effort in some areas," as was evidenced by the existence of 43 separate research projects dealing with repetitive studies of hormone secretion. The committee also found that while the projects at the experiment station were slightly better than USDA in-house projects, both ranked "poorly" in comparison with the quality of research supported by the competitive grants programs at NSF and NIH. The panels concluded, for example, that none of the molecular biology projects supported by USDA would have been funded by NSF or NIH, and that almost two-thirds of the photosynthesis projects supported by federal and state agricultural funds could not win NSF support. All in all, the committee found the amount of low quality agricultural research "significant," "appalling," and "inexcusable."

Basic Science. The committee found that agricultural research "is suffering from an inadequate interaction with the basic disciplines that underlie it" and gives "grossly inadequate support" to basic science. As an example, the committee said it was "appalled" at the low level of support given to basic biochemical research by the USDA. A panel on agriculture-related biochemical research, which was chaired by Nobelist Holley, a biochemist, and Harlyn O. Halvorson, a Brandeis University cell biologist, concluded that less than 10 per cent of the nation's research in plant physiology, one of the major sciences underlying agriculture, is supported by USDA. The panel also concluded that "not one of the nation's outstanding leaders in photosynthesis," a subject of crucial importance to crop yields, receives his major support from USDA, and it said the USDA has been "irresponsible" in failing to recognize the importance of nitrogen fixation research. "One gets the impression that the management of USDA is unaware of the contribution science can make to its mission," the panel said.

Scientific Personnel. The committee found that "too much of the research is of low scientific quality, indicating low ability of some researchers." The committee blamed the allegedly poor quality of agricultural investigators on a variety of factors, including, among others, the training they receive, their lack of contact with the basic scientific disciplines, the way they are managed, and various intangible factors in their research environment. The committee particularly criticized the USDA's reliance on in-house personnel, rather than "unbiased peer groups," to evaluate a scien-

(Continued on page 3)

New Volume Numbering for SGR

So that each annual volume of SGR will conform to the calendar year, Vol. II ended with No. 18, dated Dec. 15, 1972, and Vol. III commences with this issue. The number of copies per annual subscription is in no way affected by this change.

Repression in the Agriculture Labs?

A National Academy of Sciences panel which investigated the state of agriculture-related biochemical research reported that it found a wide variety of working conditions in the installations it surveyed, including some situations which were described as "shocking." The panel, which was headed by Nobelist Robert W. Holley and Cell Biologist Harlyn O. Halvorson, reported these comments from disaffected agricultural scientists:

"Your form letter soliciting my opinion about the present health of agriculture-related biochemical research has been received at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. My mail—both incoming and outgoing—is censored and telephone conversation is monitored. Thus I am unable to express my opinion for fear of reprisals."

"He (the Director) operates by threatening people with reassignment to more unpleasant jobs, demotion, abolition of their jobs, and dismissal. Several people have complained about his abusive language. Nothing riles him as much as basic research and professional recognition."

"It has become quite evident that the present director . . . intends to rule this laboratory by calculated intimidation."

"He (the director) 'doesn't know of a single instance where chemistry ever solved an agricultural problem' . . . 'There are too many people (in our laboratory) doing science' . . . If he could have his way, he'd fire the whole laboratory and start fresh with a whole new crew."

"The staff is on the verge of 'mutiny'; it appears that a total collapse of morale will come at any time."

Top officials at the Agriculture Department acknowledge that the Academy panel stumbled on to at least one particularly unfortunate situation in which a newly appointed overzealous laboratory director, whose background was in engineering, had been abusing his scientific staff. The Academy panelists wanted the director fired, but USDA claims it has "rectified the situation" through educating the director about his responsibilities.

NAS STUDY *(Continued from page 2)*

tist's progress. "This formula of review increases the chances of rewarding mediocrity rather than providing the security with which good men and programs move forward and the poor are held back," the committee warned.

Allocation of Resources. The committe complained that Congress, in response to pressure from special interest groups, has sanctioned a "grossly imbalanced earmarking of funds" for research on specific commodities, such as cotton and forestry, with the result that "needs in other commodity areas cannot be met" and, more importantly, "money will not be available for exploratory and basic research that might greatly improve science in agriculture." The committee noted that while the cash value of the cotton crop in 1969 was only 36 per cent of the value of soybeans 56 per cent of wheat, and 19 per cent of corn, appropriations for cotton research were 299 per cent of the amount spent on soybean research, 201 per cent of the amount spent on wheat, and 170 per cent of the amount spent on corn.

Management. The committee found "very disturbing evidence of ineptness" by some administrators: "grossly inadequate" programs for staff improvement, resulting in "stagnation and premature obsolescence of the scientists;" and management practices that "reduce the decision-making power and freedom of movement of the scientists, with repressive effects on the quality of science."

Field Laboratories. The committee concluded that "too large a portion of dollars available for facilities, both federal and state," have been used to develop some 500 small field laboratories and branch stations whose scientific productivity is "considerably lower" than the main stations. It blamed this "dispersal of resources" on "congressional thrusts in response to local interests."

Recommendations. The Academy committee made some 20 recommendations for improving the quality of agricultural research, many of which involved applying to agriculture the techniques used elsewhere in supporting and managing basic science. Thus the committee recommended that USDA seek appropriations for a competitive grants program, without commodity earmarking, to include support of basic research in the biological, physical and social sciences related to agriculture. It also urged that USDA and the land-grant colleges recruit researchers and administrators from the scientific community at large; bring active researchers into research planning; establish a system of peer review for research proposals, programs, and individual scientists; enhance the professional environment; provide opportunities for postdoctoral training; and close down unproductive field stations, among other "bold moves" deemed necessary to drag agricultural research out of "stagnation." — PMB

Response at USDA: Defects in Academic Report

A subcommittee of the Agricultural Research Policy Advisory Committee, a group which advises both the secretary of agriculture and the president of the land-grant association, has taken strong exception to many of the Academy's findings and recommendations. After reviewing the Academy report, the subcommittee complained that it contained "value loaded terminology" and reflected the bias of basic scientists who, in some recommendations, were out to feather their own disciplinary nests.

The subcommittee, for example, disputed the implication that commodity earmarking by Congress is more likely to produce harmful resource allocation than would allocation by a consensus of scientists. "Scientists in the supportive basic disciplines would be much more effective in their quest for agricultural research funds if they would turn their attention to interpreting and articulating the necessity of their discipline to the achievement of commodity missions or other problem oriented goals; terms which the Congress, the lay public, and various interest groups understand," the subcommittee said. "It will not accomplish much to simply criticize the process or those who are part of it."

The subcommittee also charged that the postdoctoral program recommended by the Academy would expose the postdocs to exploitation as high-class technicians and it suggested that the competitive grants program recommended by the Academy would lead to "major internal conflicts of interest" when USDA tried to administer both in-house and competitive grants programs.

The subcommittee agreed with many of the Academy's findings, but it complained that the Academy report was "deliberately cast from the viewpoint of the basic disciplines. Thus the recommendations and much of the dialogue reflect the science view with limited recognition of the missions of the Agricultural Research agencies. Indeed there was only limited recognition of the massive current basic discipline activity in ongoing problem oriented programs."

A somewhat less heated response came from Ned D. Bayley, director of science and education at USDA, who praised the Academy report for providing "many insights" into the federal-state program of agricultural research, a program which he acknowledged has long been closed to this type of outside scrutiny. But Bayley, in a 5-page statement, also cited "certain aspects of the report which detract from its overall impact." One such aspect is a "continual undercurrent" that more funds are needed for research, an emphasis, which Bayley said distracts attention from better utilizing existing funds.

Another is an emphasis on publications as a measure of research productivity when such a measure is "recognized as valid by only some of the scientific community." A third aspect was the committee's reliance on progress reports contained in the Current Research Information System as the basis for judging the quality of agricultural research. Bayley argued that the Academy committee's judgments concerning allegedly low-quality research were "more a reflection of the deficiencies of the progress reports as reports rather than the deficiencies of the research on which they are based." Bayley also noted that the Agricultural Research Service had been extensively reorganized during the time of the Academy review, and he said that this reorganization would, in part, meet the Academy's recommendations for "bold moves." When everything is considered, Bayley said, "agricultural research has been and continues to be one of the outstanding success stories in the history of research and society."

NSF Committees Realigned To Defy Open Advisory Act

NSF has raised the claim of "efficiency" for its recent amalgamation of some half dozen separate research advisory committees into a single Advisory Committee for Research. But the real reason, NSF officials tell SGR, is that the new setup is expected to provide a legal rationale for keeping NSF money-granting panels closed to the public after the Federal Advisory Committee act takes effect Jan. 5 (SGR, Vol. II, No. 18).

The newly created Advisory Committee for Research will provide counsel on general management matters, such as cost-sharing arrangements and procedures for awarding fellowships. It will be open to the public, in accord with the Advisory Committee Act.

However, the 20-25 disciplinary panels which review applications for grants are regarded by NSF "as an integral part of the decision-making process," and will be closed to the public, as will NSF's topmost policy body, the National Science Board.

In the past, some overlap of function occurred between the panels and the research advisory committees. These have now been eliminated in anticipation of the Advisory Committee Act taking effect.

Suit Hits at Academic Lab for Selling Research Services

A private research firm's lawsuit charging unfair competition by the non-profit Franklin Institute could have major reprecussions on the widespread practice of universities selling research services. If successful, it could even impair current efforts by the federal government to promote collaboration between academic and industrial research organizations.

In a Federal suit filed last October, Structure Probe, Inc., of West Chester, Pa., charged that the Franklin Institute, in nearby Philadelphia, is taking advantage of its non-profit status to undercut commercial prices for industrial microscopy services in the Delaware Valley.

Seeking damages under the Clayton Act and the Sherman Antitrust Act, the firm contends that the Institute "is engaged in a policy of selling SEM (scanning electron microscopy) services at prices below those charged by Plaintiff with the intention of unlawfully monopolizing the SEM services business in the Delaware Valley." Structure Probe claims a business loss totaling $151,200 over 18 months and is asking the court for treble damages, legal fees, and an injunction barring further commercial activities by the Institute.

In support of its claim it contends that the Institute went into the business of selling microscopy services in violation of its chartered objective, which is the "perpetuation of the memory of Benjamin Franklin and the promotion and encouragement of science, technology and the mechanic and useful arts." The Institute's own needs, Structure Probe contends, are satisfied by one electron microscope but "In 1971, after Plaintiff began to sell SEM services in the Delaware Valley, Defendant purchased a second scanning microscope with the intention of unlawfully monopolizing the SEM services business in the Delaware Valley." The complaint states that the exact extent of the Institute's commercial microscopy business is not known, but it accounts "for more than fifty percent" of the SEM services business in the region.

It is further charged that the Institute "does not pay certain taxes and import duties, and consequently is able to charge lower prices . . ." In addition, the Institute benefits from "direct subsidies in money and equipment from the federal, state, and local governments . . ."

Structure Probe's president, Charles A. Garber, a 31-year-old Ph.D. engineer from Case Western Reserve University, declined to discuss the suit with SGR, but in October he was quoted by the local press as saying that Franklin has been undercutting his prices by 30 percent. "I don't want to sue the Institute," he is quoted in the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. "But I'm at the end of my rope. I've been to my congressman, my legislator, to everybody including the Institute to get them out of this business. Nobody listened to me, so I had to sue."

Business Week quotes the Institute's lawyers as acknowledging that the Institute pays no federal or state corporate net income taxes, but they contended that research revenues of $6.37 million last year fell short of expenses by $157,973. And Institute President Bowen Dees, a former top NSF official, has been quoted as saying that the suit, if successful, "would have great implications because every university in the United States would be affected. They receive far more help from the government than we do, and they are all not-for-profit institutions, as we are."

At the moment, the court is taking depositions and trial has not been scheduled, but the issue is being closely watched by two commercial research associations that have been pressing for tighter restrictions on commercial activities by non-profit

(Continued on page 6)

Franklin Suit Raises Questions About New NSF Plan to Test in Federal Labs

Relevant to the issues raised in the Structure Probe suit against the Franklin Institute (see article this page) is the newly announced Project No. 1 of NSF's Experimental R&D Incentives Program, which aims to employ federal laboratories for "validation testing" of new technical concepts.

As described in a fact sheet issued by NSF (copies available without charge from Evan Anderson, NSF, Room 549, 1800 G St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20050), the object is to establish claimed performance early in the innovative process so as to assure sources of venture capital needed for advanced development. Participants may be individuals, corporations, state, county, city, or local governments, or academic institutions. The validation testing will be performed by federal laboratories, with NSF providing the government's share of the costs according to a formula based on profit-making potential and "public interest."

However, no provision is provided for performing the testing in commercial laboratories, an omission that conflicts directly with the principle that underlies the suit against the Franklin Institute.

Engineers Report Continued Slump in Freshman Enrollment

Freshman engineering enrollments last fall were 14 per cent below those of the previous year and were down 35 per cent from the 1967 level, according to the Engineering Manpower Commission of the Engineers Joint Council. The one-year decline added up to about 20,000 students.

The decline at the intake level of the educational cycle was accompanied by the largest output of new degree holders in engineering since 1950—44,190 bachelors, 17,356 masters, and 3774 Ph.D's. The Commission predicted that the most recently graduated class will be the largest for at least five or six years because of the decreased size of incoming classes.

Last year's graduates included 791 women, 455 US blacks, and 5690 foreign nationals.

By fields, degrees earned were as follows:

	Bachelor's	Master's	Engineer	Doctor's
Aerospace	2018	671	33	205
Agricultural	394	166	0	64
Architectural	380	8	0	0
Biomedical	84	78	0	38
Ceramic	202	60	3	25
Chemical	3600	1158	14	413
Civil	6982	2507	51	438
Computer	359	627	0	83
Electrical	12430	4211	141	850
Engineering (general)	1903	324	0	29
Engineering Mechanics	245	275	3	174
Engineering Physics	290	79	6	24
Engineering Science	884	416	0	123
Environmental	77	376	1	56
Geological	177	87	0	48
Industrial	3159	1796	23	189
Manufacturing	48	28	0	0
Marine	455	109	20	17
Materials	112	125	3	83
Mechanical	8642	2312	44	458
Metallurgical	590	311	3	163
Mining	194	69	0	20
Nuclear	291	374	7	124
Petroleum	307	86	1	21
Systems	133	497	0	87
All Other Engineering	234	253	0	42
Total	44190	17003	353	3774

The major producers of engineering graduates were:

Bachelor's Degrees

Purdue U	972	Iowa St U	607
U of Illinois-Urbana	733	North Carolina St U	607
Georgia Inst of Tech	727	U of Minnesota	589
Northeastern U	727	U of Washington	588
U of Michigan	726	Ohio St U	558
U of Missouri-Rolla	716	Texas A & M U	512
Pennsylvania St U	687	Virginia Poly Inst	512
Newark Coll of Engrg	681		

Master's Degrees (including Engineer Degrees)

Stanford U	724	U of Missouri-Rolla	359
M I T	511	U of Michigan	354
U of Calif-Berkeley	492	Poly Inst of Brooklyn	341
New York U	423	Purdue U	338
U of Illinois-Urbana	365	U of Southern Calif	334

Doctor's Degrees

Stanford U	187
U of Calif-Berkeley	186
M I T	162
U of Illinois-Urbana	118
U of Michigan	108
Purdue U	108

These data are drawn from a report now being prepared for publication, *Engineering and Technology Graduates 1972*. Copies, $15 each, may be ordered in advance of publication from Engineers Joint Council, Department P, 345 E. 47th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

SUIT HITS ACADEMIC LAB *(Continued from page 5)*

organizations—the American Council of Independent Laboratories and the National Council of Professional Service Firms in Private Enterprise.

If the suit is successful, it could create a dilemma for the Nixon administration's efforts, principally through NSF and the National Bureau of Standards, to provide incentives for collaboration between industrial and academic laboratories. That effort, which is just now getting underway, with a total budget of nearly $40 million, is based on the assumption that the innovative process can benefit from closer links between academe and industry. Technologically, that may be so; but ideologically, the Nixon administration is committed to favoring business over government-supported enterprise, and it may be hard to make a case for a government-subsidized non-profit taking business away from a plain old-fashioned profit-seeking company.

Some inkling of Nixonian thinking on the subject is to be found in a recent decision barring federal grantees from buying supplies at government bargain prices through the General Services Administration. That decision followed a long campaign by the National Association of Wholesalers and 16 other trade associations, all of whom charged that sales through GSA constituted unfair competition.

Bad News for Biomedical Research?

Gloomy days lie ahead for the biomedical research community in the wake of top-level management changes in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. That would seem to be the implication of some informed speculation provided to SGR by Merlin K. DuVal, who has just resigned from the post of assistant secretary of HEW for health.

HEW and its constituent agencies are currently undergoing a massive leadership change as part of the Nixon Administration's drive to gain greater management control over the sprawling federal bureaucracy. The department has already lost its secretary, under secretary, three assistant secretaries, the surgeon general, and the top administrators of such constituent agencies as NIH, the Health Services and Mental Health Administration, and the Social and Rehabilitation Service. The biomedical community has been buzzing with speculation as to just what this wholesale departure of top officials portends, but the decision-making has been held close to the White House and there are few reliable guides as to what it all means.

As DuVal sees it, the most likely impact of the changes will be a drastic, short-term cutback in funds for new grants at NIH followed by a resumption of funding as HEW's new managers begin to realize that an investment in research pays off in the long run. "They'll start with a heavy hand and then relax on the throttle," he predicts. DuVal, who resigned voluntarily on Dec. 15 to return to the University of Arizona as vice-president for health affairs, is no longer involved in government decision-making. But he was highly regarded by the Nixon Administration (he was even asked to stay on as assistant secretary), he was privy to preparations for the fiscal 1974 budget, which is currently in the fine-tuning stage before final White House approval, and he presumably has a good instinct for the prevailing winds in the Administration.

Not all of the personnel shifts stem from the same causes, according to DuVal, but underlying many of them is "a very real purpose," namely, an attempt on the part of the White House to "recapture some control" over the federal bureaucracy by moving a White House oriented management structure further into the bureaucracy.

The two changes which are causing the most concern in the biomedical community involve the secretary of HEW and the director of NIH. At the secretary's level, the President is shifting Elliott L. Richardson, the incumbent secretary, over to the Defense Department, and is replacing him with Caspar W. Weinberger, who is currently director of the Office of Management and Budget. DuVal interprets this shift as an indication that the White House believes any agency head, and that includes Richardson, eventually becomes an "advocate and effective spokesman" for his agency's programs instead of a hard-nosed manager. Weinberger, on the other hand, is a manager whose cost-cutting exploits at OMB won him the nickname of "Cap the Knife" while his office was given the acronym TOMB to reflect the fact that it was the graveyard of many programs. Weinberger's top assistant at HEW will be another OMB official, Frank C. Carlucci, who will succeed John G. Veneman as undersecretary.

Most of the Administration's verbal fire has thus far been aimed at "bloated" and costly social programs which are said to be driving the federal budget out of control; there has been little or no

(Continued on page 8)

To renew your subscription or to have one entered in your own name, please use the coupon at right. You may also use this form to have a complimentary copy sent to a friend or colleague.

SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT, ©1973 by Science & Government Report, Inc. All rights reserved. Daniel S. Greenberg, Publisher; Philip M. Boffey, Managing Editor; Bettina Conner, Production Manager. Published 22 times per year at 1629 Columbia Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Subscription rate, $35 a year; overseas airmail subscription, $45. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. Vol. III, No. 1, Jan. 1, 1973.

Science & Government Report
Box 21123 Kalorama Station, Section B
Washington, D.C. 20009

☐ Renew my subscription
☐ Enter my subscription

for ☐ two years, $65; or ☐ one year, $35. (Overseas airmail, $10 additional.) ☐ check enclosed; ☐ please bill.

☐ Send a complimentary copy to:

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Science on Capitol Hill: The View from the White House

When the people at the White House who are responsible for scientific affairs look toward Capitol Hill these days, they don't like what they see.

First of all there is Senator Kennedy, from whom no disavowals of presidential intent are persuasive, and he has been furiously poking around all sorts of scientific and medical issues, usually at cross purposes with the administration. Two years ago there began the Nixon-Kennedy race to become the national anti-cancer champion, finally resolved by the belated arrival of good sense in both camps. And then, over strong opposition from the White House, Kennedy this year won Senate approval of S. 32, the National Science Policy and Priorities Act, which, among may other things, would rapidly establish equality between domestic and military R&D spending—which the administration regards as a certain formula for calamity. Senate passage of S. 32 was erased when Congress adjourned without the House having completed action on a companion bill. But, since it passed through the Senate, 70-8, last time, it should encounter no trouble in the 93rd Congress. The odds for House passage are not clear, but they're far from remote. Nixon would almost certainly veto the measure, but the price would be great ill will in an area where the statesmen of science have striven for amity.

While S. 32 hovers on the horizon, Kennedy is moving toward control of the Office of Technology Assessment, which, because it is new, is an unknown factor in science and government relations. But the view from the White House is that the Senator was not drawn to the post by scholastic interest in the intricacies of telling the future.

And then there is the Federal Advisory Committee Act, which the lawyers will interpret so that no advisory group will be exposed to public view if its parent agency prefers secrecy. The Act, however, invites a lot of nuisance activity, and while it cannot force doors open, it requires an explanation from those who would keep them shut. On Nov. 9, following passage of the Act, SGR wrote to White House Science Advisor Edward E. David, Jr. to express pleasure at the prospect of seeing him and his colleagues at meetings of the President's Science Advisory Committee, and to request the PSAC agenda and other relevant material. The letter has so far gone unanswered, but there are probably lots of others like it which have arrived in government offices, and the effect is unsettling for the recipients.

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH *(Continued from page 7)*

mention of any need to economize on research programs at NIH. But DuVal believes that research will, temporarily at least, get caught up in the same cost cutting effort that he predicts will bring about "a relatively massive cut" in all of HEW's controllable expenditures in fiscal 1974. He makes a "flat prediction" that "what you'll find at first will be relatively serious budget cutting for its own sake." He believes that "the Carlucci's and the Weinberger's" will try hard to "get the fat out" of the NIH budget, but that "as they get closer to it and get better educated" they will realize that research has paid off in dollar savings " and the investment will start going up again in that area." The social programs of HEW, on the other hand, are more vunerable to long-term budget cutting, in DuVal's opinion.

Still, the short-term outlook for biomedical research seems bleak. DuVal predicts that funding will be so tight that there will be "no new starts in a lot of programs" for as long as a year or two—with notable exceptions apt to be made for such politically popular programs as the cancer and heart campaigns.

Science & Government Report
Kalorama Station
Box 21123
Section B
Washington, D.C. 20009

NEWSLETTER—
Please expedite delivery directly to addressee

Second class postage paid
at Washington, D.C.